

CAMBRIDGE SUMMER MEETING.

PART I.

The Summer University Extension Meeting was held this year at Cambridge, and perhaps some account of it may not come amiss to students as a suggestion for future holidays. The meeting is divided into two halves of a fortnight each; and the total cost of ticket of admission, board and lodging, and railway journey (for which special reductions are made), does not exceed £5 for one half.

Cambridge itself, for the benefit of those who do not already know and love it, is a sort of inland mediæval Venice—all waterways. Excursions were made to Ely, Garden City, Letchworth, and parties were taken round the colleges, so there was plenty for the idle sightseer. Arrangements were also made as to tennis courts, &c., and water parties made up, so there was plenty for the frivolous. Those who came to attend lectures and learn had a rich feast.

The course chosen related chiefly to the 18th Century. The American Ambassador devoted his inaugural address to the Declaration of American Independence, and continued with diplomatic tact to delight all and offend none.

The lectures were delivered in the various schools and the theatre—sitting in the stalls at 10 o'clock in the morning was a novel experience. Professor Grant gave an admirable course on English History during the period, and the various great writers were taken separately: Dr. Johnson, Cowper (by the Bishop of Durham), Goldsmith and Sheridan (by Mr. Powys, Addison (by Mr. Sedgwick), &c.

There was also a theological course by the Bishop of Ely, and one on social problems, especially on Unemployment, from Professor Chapman, of Manchester, which really brought together an immense number of thinking people of all classes.

That is *the* charm of the whole meeting; Dons and working men, and mere girls and teachers, and foreigners of all descriptions meet on common ground in the true Republic of Letters.

There was also a series devoted to practical teaching—especially a wonderfully helpful lecture on Geography—with particulars as to the new geographical tripos.

For the musical there were frequent organ recitals in the various exquisite chapels, and a special service of unaccompanied music in King's one Sunday night late, which was a memory for a lifetime. Its spacious gloom just lit with wax candles, and the great volume of perfectly-trained voices combined to make the experience unique.

Next summer the meeting will be at Oxford, and the central subject will be the place taken by Oxford in all branches of England's history. It can only be hoped that many students will find it possible to be there, and to enjoy the vast privileges and great opportunities thus offered.

R. A. P.

NOTES ON MY SUMMER MEETING
EXPERIENCES.

I feel it beyond me to adequately describe the Summer Meeting—even one-half of it—but I will attempt to give an impression of my delightful fortnight, and perhaps, after all, a point of view is quite as interesting in its way as a faithful and impartial account.

A dockyard mechanic spoke of the Summer Meeting as “the green spot” in his life. I thought of it as a very sunny spot in my own; and it seemed that I had come away with a large stock of happiness laid in, which would last me several months, and it is happiness that can be replenished from time to time, for the meeting is an opportunity of making valued and lasting friendships. When all sorts and conditions of people are drawn together by a common interest, there must be friendships waiting for all, if they can only find out one another in time, and herein lies the great advantage of staying at one of the colleges. Selwyn College kindly received the men students, and Newnham the women students,

on terms within the range of many modest incomes; and it was very pleasant to experience a fortnight of what some of our fellow-creatures are lucky enough to enjoy three years of. Although one can always find someone to talk to and be with at Newnham, one can always find a quiet corner too, either in some far-off spot in the charming grounds, or in one's own prettily-furnished little bed-sitting room.

It is not necessary to make much preparation for the Summer Meeting, though the pleasure must be doubled for those who have been able to do a course of reading for the lectures beforehand; but it is a pity to arrive on the scenes without some definite idea of how one is going to spend the time.

The lectures average four or five a day, but the majority of people cannot manage to attend all. Those who are unaccustomed to regular brain-work find that at first they are unable to keep their attention for so long, nor to take in so much, and that these strenuous days are very tiring. Strength of mind and body, then, have to be economised, also of time, for a prominent feature of the Meetings, at least to newcomers, is the sight-seeing, which one is apt to neglect at the beginning, thinking that it can be put in at odd times. I found myself very hard-worked trying to get into the last two days some of the best lectures of Part II.; visits to Girton, which meant a five-mile walk, as I had not been able to join any of the parties going there; to the Fitz-William Museum; to the Colleges, of which to my regret I only saw about half; a row up the Backs; and a garden party at Trinity Hall given by the Vice-Chancellor and Mrs. Beck to the Extension Students. All of these I managed; and yet there is sight-seeing left for a future Summer Meeting; and I have said nothing of an interesting excursion to the Garden City, round which we were taken in personally-conducted parties, and an all too short visit to Ely on my own account.

Needless to say I came away from Cambridge tired out in body, but so much refreshed in mind, that after one or two good nights' rests I felt all the more vigorous and energetic, and I cannot give anyone better advice than to go and do likewise next year at Oxford.

M. G.

A GLIMPSE OF OOTACAMUND.

Most people enjoy the lovely hill stations of India, with their perfect climates and beautiful surroundings, but few could really revel more in the many joys of Ooty, the highest point of the Nilgherry Hills, and one of the loveliest spots in the world, than my sister and I did when we went up there after the long Madras hot weather.

We left Madras one hot, stifling evening, and after one night in the train, we changed on to the little narrow gauge railway that goes 5,000 feet up the Ghaut. The journey then was full of interest to me, as I had never experienced anything of the kind before. We ascended very gradually at first, and when we had gone about five miles, we came to a river and found that the bridge had been carried away by the recent floods. We all had to get out of the train and go across the river over a rickety floating bridge made of planks. It was only two feet wide, and on one side only had a shaky bamboo railing. This, added to the fact that the river was a quarter of a mile wide and about twenty feet deep, made the journey to the opposite bank a somewhat risky proceeding. My own experience is one I never wish to repeat, novel though it was. I had sprained my ankle a few days before we left Madras, and as I could not walk, I had to be carried over the river by coolies. I got out of the train and into an ordinary wooden armchair, which four natives were meant to carry on two bamboo poles, like a sedan chair. However after some delay and a great deal of chattering, it appeared the bamboos were not forthcoming, so I was hoisted up without, and after going safely along the line for fifty yards or so we came to the river, and I found we had to go down a fearful precipice to the level of the water which had subsided quickly after the flood and was very low—so low that it was impossible to realise that it had ever been high enough to wash away the railway bridge. At this point of the journey I had a great desire to jump out of the chair and walk at any price; but we were down the river bank at last and on the bridge. All this time the coolies were singing (as they always do when they carry heavy weights!) the refrain

of their song being "bamboo," suggested probably by the recent discussion about the carrying pole. On the bridge I had the advantage over the other passengers, as I got across dryshod. The bridge, floating on the water, sank down and was swamped as I went over, and the people coming behind had the full benefit of the water I stirred up. When I was safely across four natives came and changed places with the first lot. They had to carry me up to the level of the railway line again; and suddenly, without any warning, they lifted the chair on to their shoulders and ran up the bank even before I had time to scream, and I was soon safely in the train again. After that we continued our journey quite peacefully, passing through the grandest scenery imaginable. The line runs round the extreme edge of the Ghaut, and on the left side of it there is a deep precipice with limitless plains beyond, and on the right there is nothing to be seen but mountains rising one above the other, some bare and rocky, others covered with magnificent ferns and feathery bamboos, and planted in places with tea and coffee bushes. We passed the famous bee rock, said to have more bees' nests in it than any place in India. It faces the plains and is probably a very sunny spot.

At last we reached Coonoor, the railway terminus, and the rest of our journey of twelve miles all up-hill was made by "tonga." A tonga is simply a rough two-wheeled cart with a large hood, and drawn by two country ponies that cover the ground very quickly considering how poor and ill-fed they look. We felt very cold and uncomfortable during this last stage of the journey, as it poured with rain all the way, but at last we reached Ooty and the pretty little house where we were to spend the next six weeks. We soon forgot we were cold and tired when we saw a lovely wood fire and a real English tea ready for us. It was so home-like to have tea by lamplight and to see the curtains drawn, but the joy of trying to get warm was the nicest part of the whole evening. Everything, even sleeping under blankets, was a treat during those first days. I had to content myself with driving until I was able to use my foot, but there was always plenty to see. The wild flowers were wonderful; arum lilies were as common as daisies, and grew in big clumps along every road, and are counted as weeds by the gardeners. The hedges are generally made of geraniums or

heliotrope, the latter was in full flower when we arrived at Ooty, and mimosa, also in flower, was all over the hills. Every place we saw seemed more beautiful than the last; but I think the part I liked best was a little country lane with dandelions and dock leaves growing under the hedge; it reminded me more of home than anything I have seen since I left England.

The Ooty Downs, bare open hills, very like parts of Sussex only steeper, stretch for miles beyond the town, and provide the hunting country for which Ooty is so famous, and which is found in no other hill station in India. The air there is beautifully fresh, but so rarified that walking uphill made us pant and puff like steam engines, until we had got well acclimatised. One day we had a lovely tea picnic on the Douris and bicycled to a point where we seemed to reach the very edge of the hills, and could look right down to the plains, 8,000 feet below. It was such a glorious view; and it seemed so strange to think we were really living on the tops of mountains, and could literally fall over the edge if we walked too far. Frequently out hunting, the jackal (which takes the place of a fox in India) used to make for the plains as a sure refuge, and the hounds would try and follow, and get lost for the rest of the day.

The native hill tribes are very hardy, so different from those in the plains. The men are very tall and well built, with sallow faces and long curly black hair. They live mostly in the open air, either growing their crops or looking after the herds of buffaloes that wander about on the Downs. They live in little round huts made of twisted boughs and dried palm leaves, built in the valleys or on some sheltered hill. We used to meet groups of them crossing the Downs, such fierce looking men with blankets wound round them and alpenstocks in their hands.

We were very sorry when the day came for us to leave Ooty, but we went away considerably stronger than when we arrived, and ready for a three days' railway journey to Secunderabad in the Deccan. We bicycled the twelve miles to Coonoor, a lovely ride all down hill which was over far too soon, and were whirled along in the train to the much-abused plains of India, where we are likely to stay until next hot weather is over.

L. CONDER.